

CHRIS MCGREGOR AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF BREATH

By Maxine McGregor. Published by Bamberger Books. PO Box 1126, Flint, Michigan, MI48501-1126, USA. 259pp \$17.00 ISBN 0-917453-32-8.

This very personal biography is a delight to read and the author's love and affection for McGregor permeates every page. It tells not only the story of the principal's life, both in South Africa and Europe, but also a great deal about the musicians and friends whose lives interacted with his. It reports on the stupidity of the South African bureaucracy of the time and this will infuriate the reader almost as much as the horrors of apartheid.

Above all, it tells the story of how the McGregors coped with it all, while producing some of the most beautiful and exciting music of the era. At no time is there any hint of despair; in circumstances quite often as difficult as it is possible to imagine, the McGregors put together both their lives and a very important musical legacy.

Maxine sensibly quotes from a wide range of sources regarding the music of both the Blue Notes and Brotherhood of Breath and she interpolates these passages in a way that never disrupts the narrative flow.

The final product comes over as a book by a highly intelligent and sensitive amateur, with a natural writing talent and an affection for her husband, matched only by a passion for his music. By the end of the third reading, I almost felt myself a member of the McGregor 'family'. Only special writers provide that kind of entrée.
Barry McRae